

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the City Planning Commission determined to segment the City and its extraterritorial planning jurisdiction into six planning areas. This was as an outgrowth of the completed and adopted St. Paul's Area Plan.

The Planning Commission prioritized and assigned numbers to these areas. The area that is covered by this Plan is designated Area Specific Plan #1. The area has since renamed to **Eastside Area Specific Plan**. The purpose of the Plan is to address the issues that will influence land development patterns for the next ten to fifteen years. The biggest factor in the Planning Area is the Newton-Conover Eastern Loop or U2404A. The thoroughfare is currently under construction at the time of consideration of this Plan. This thoroughfare will fundamentally alter and will contribute demands for land use that heretofore had not existed. This thoroughfare will be a portion of a Loop around the City that will connect residential areas, industrial areas, commercial areas with I-40, ultimately in Conover and I-40, in Hickory.

The Eastside Area Specific Planning Area is bounded by NC Hwy 16 South, Town Creek, Norfolk Southern Railroad and the eastern boundary of the City's Planning Jurisdiction. The area contains 1,939 acres, 1,803 people, and 570 households (Additional Demographic information can be found in appendix A).

The Planning Commission determined early on that the biggest planning challenge in this area will be transitioning from a rural suburban area into an urban area. Characteristics of this planning area are a mixture of rural and vacant areas and some urbanized areas in terms of suburban subdivisions.

The Planning Commission with the City staff evaluated statistical information, demographic information, consulted with the Western Piedmont Council of Government on transportation issues, with the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation on economic development issues, consulted with David Walters, Professor of Urban Architecture, UNCC, on design and community character issues, and held a drop-in workshop for all property owners within the planning area. Issues were identified and narrowed into focus points. The Plan itself consists of sections on demographics, statistical information, transportation, utilities, environment, design and community character, land use and governmental issues.

The Plan is different in the sense that it is not a wordy document but rather deals with existing conditions, provides development guidance, and then offers policy statements.

The document and the associated maps and tables are to be used as guidance for the Planning Commission and the City Council in developing regulations and also in making decisions for how the area should develop in the future.

Early on, the Planning staff identified to the Planning Commission elements of Smart Growth and in fact, had a workshop on the concept and reviewed a paper from the Institute of Government entitled "A Smart Growth Toolbox for Local Governments". The purpose of Smart Growth is for a community to grow responsibly and sensibly while translating broad support for these concepts into concrete programs for action. The Toolbox identified urban form and design, open space and natural

areas, economic equity, planning and intergovernmental cooperation, public facilities, and focused on how infill development and suburban development could be blended.

The Planning Commission and staff felt that it was appropriate to consult these tools for policy guidance since that is the major challenge in planning for this area.

TRANSPORTATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Eastside Planning Area contains an existing street network of 20.46 miles of street.

The area's network consists of two Arterials, NC Hwy 16 and NC Hwy 10 and several collector streets, Burris Road, Mount Olive Church Road, East 11th Street and Ann Avenue, with the remainder of the streets in the area classified as local streets. The State, City, and private property owners are responsible for the maintenance of the network. The State maintains 10.45 miles, the City 7.63 miles and private property owners 2.38 miles as shown on **Map 1, Street Maintenance**.

The volume of traffic on the network varies from a few vehicles a day on one of the privately maintained streets to 9,800 vehicles per day on NC Hwy 16, see chart below for Average Daily Traffic counts for streets in the Planning Area.

Table 1: Average Daily Traffic Counts for Roads in the Eastside Planning Area for 1988 to 2025.

	1988	1990	1992	1994	1997	1999	2001	2025*
Burris Road at Bridge	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,100	1,000	1,000	1,100	5,100
Mt. Olive Church Road north of Ann Av	5,200	5,500	6,200	5,500	7,000	5,900	5,800	7,600
Mt. Olive Church Road north of Mcree Rd	5,100	5,800	5,800	7,200	6,900	6,800	6,500	8,400
Travis Road near Mt. Olive	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,400	1,100	1,100	1,100	N/A
Ann Av	2,100	1,900	1,900	1,900	2,000	1,800	1,900	N/A
East 11th	1,200	1,200	1,300	1,300	700	1,100	1,300	1,900
East 1St	1,500	1,800	1,900	1,800	1,700	2,100	1,400	3,200
NC Hwy 10	2,800	3,100	3,500	3,300	N/A	3,300	6,500	11,800
NC Hwy 16	10,700	7,900	11,900	11,900	N/A	9,900	9,800	14,100
1800 Caleb Setzer	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,200	1,300	1,300	1,300	N/A

Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation ADT Maps

*Projection

The planning area is located within the planning jurisdiction of the Greater Hickory Metro Planning Organization (MPO). In an effort to meet future traffic demands and to reduce congestion, the MPO adopted a Transportation plan in 1986 and updated the plan in 2001. The following projects as shown on **Map 2, TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS**, are recommended within the planning area:

Newton-Conover East Loop

This part of the Loop serves the eastern part of the Newton-Conover urban area extending from NC 16S in Newton to NC 16N in Conover. This facility will remove a considerable amount of through and truck traffic from the downtowns of both Newton and Conover, thus reducing the travel demand on the road system in those locations. The projected 2025 traffic volumes range from a low of 14,000 trips per day to a high of 30,000 trips per day. The Loop is particularly important to the City of Newton as well as the planning area because it will provide North/South movement that is not available currently and increase accessibility to Interstate 40. The loop is scheduled to be completed Fall 2006.

East First Street and Extension (Newton)

The combination of East First Street, its extension and Saint James Church Road forms a major north-south thoroughfare serving the eastern Newton Area. This facility will improve travel between the residential area in southern Newton to an industrial area in the northeast part of the City. The projected 2025 traffic volume on this facility is about 3,000 trips per day. The recommended cross-section for East First Street and its extension is a standard 2-lane urban section 60' in width.

West A Street and Extensions (Newton)

This facility extends from Old Conover-Startown Road to Coulter Avenue in eastern Newton. It provides service for the cross-town travel in Newton as well as serving a mixture of development along its corridor. The proposed eastern extension will connect East A Street to the proposed First Street Extension. The western extension will connect to Startown Road. The combination of A Street and its extensions will create a continuous east-west thoroughfare serving the Newton area. In addition to providing a connecting service to the major thoroughfares in the area, this facility will also create opportunities for growth in the western Newton area. Future travel is expected to be moderate ranging from 2,000 trips per day on the western section to 9,000 trips per day in the downtown area. A cross-section of 2 lanes is recommended for the extensions.

Currently pedestrian facilities within the planning area are limited to sidewalks along East 11th Street and in Mayfair Subdivision as shown on **Map 3, Pedestrian Facilities**. The rest of the area is void of sidewalks. There currently are no bicycle facilities or greenways in the planning area. A bicycle route map for Catawba County is currently being prepared, however most routes are in the rural areas of the County. There is land that has been dedicated through provisions in the City Code to be used for the purposes of greenways.

Public transportation is provided by Piedmont Wagon, which services the Hickory-Newton-Conover area. Piedmont Wagon operates four routes with service to points of interest in the service area. Service is provided weekdays 6:15 a.m. to 6:18 p.m. and Saturday 6:15 a.m. to 4:18 p.m. No buses operate on Sunday. The system has a route that provides service to the Planning area along Mt. Olive Church Road and East 1st Street as shown on **MAP 4, Piedmont Wagon Routes and Stops**. The planning area has two of the City of Newton's most used stops Sandlewood Court and Catawba Pines

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

The City should be a good steward of its transportation resources by making every effort to conserve capacity on the existing and future transportation network, thus maintaining the quality and function of the network. This can be done by providing access management on both existing and future streets, encouraging connectivity, limiting truck traffic and building and expanding transportation facilities when existing facilities are found to be less than sufficient.

The City should be aggressive in its pursuit of connectivity between developments giving due consideration to land use and potential development patterns. Connectivity is desirable because it decreases vehicle miles traveled, reduces air pollution, contributes to social aspects of neighborhoods and also decreases vehicle friction and promotes pedestrian activity.

The planning area contains 2.38 miles of private streets. The City has concerns about providing services on these private streets in terms of public safety and general city services. Private streets have the potential to provide access to underdeveloped and undeveloped properties, as well as providing connectivity that is presently non-existent.

Evaluation of the existing street network for need and purposes should be conducted as well as all projects in the planning area on the Hickory-Newton-Conover Thoroughfare Plan. New projects that will enhance the overall transportation network as well as travel within the planning area should be recommended to the MPO for inclusion of future Thoroughfare Plans.

The City should make efforts to reduce vehicular congestion by providing alternatives to the automobile. The city should look at its pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the planning area and evaluate existing policy on expansion of those facilities. Plans for future thoroughfares should be included in developers plans for new development and redevelopment of properties in the area. The City should make efforts to see that bicycle lanes and sidewalks are a part of future thoroughfares and are constructed where appropriate along existing roads. The existing public transit service should be monitored and changes to existing routes and new routes should be recommended as the demand and density warrants such changes.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- T-1.** In an effort to reduce congestion and maximize capacity of the transportation network, the City should develop an access management ordinance that would include the Newton-Conover East Loop, as well as existing arterials and collector streets. The ordinance should address

driveway spacing and widths; connectivity among adjacent development; and accessibility to these streets.

- T-2.** The City should update the Truck route ordinance and map to include the Newton-Conover East Loop and study the existing truck routes to see if there is a need for additions, modification, or deletions.
- T-3.** The City should require stub outs in all new development where deemed appropriate based on proposed land-use as shown on **MAP 1, FUTURE LANDUSE**. As future development occurs developers shall be required to connect to existing stub outs, so as to create a connected transportation network.
- T-4.** The City should facilitate action with existing property owners along private streets to have them accepted for maintenance either by the City or NCDOT. This will ensure that the residents are able to receive both public safety and general public services, as well as provide them the opportunity to maximize the development potential and uses of their properties.
- T-5.** The City should recommend to the MPO that East A Street be extended from its existing end point to the Newton-Conover Loop. This will improve east/west access as well as providing access to the Loop from the Central Business District.
- T-6.** The City should recommend to the MPO that the East First Street Extension be evaluated to determine if the need for the project still exists. There is concern that this was the earlier location of the Newton-Conover East Loop and that this project may no longer be necessary.
- T-7.** The City should require that new development incorporate side walks along new streets and existing streets. This should be done to reduce vehicle miles traveled by allowing pedestrian travel between adjoining developments as well as providing recreation opportunities to residents, commuters, and shoppers in the area.
- T-8.** The City should provide for future greenways as property is developed and redeveloped along any proposed greenway route, land should be dedicated to the city for this purpose. Also if a multifamily, industrial, commercial project occurs along any proposed Greenway route, the developer should be responsible for construction of that affected portion of the greenway and shall dedicate said land to the City for maintenance.
- T-9.** The City should review service that Piedmont Wagon provides and recommend changes to routes and services as needed. This should include the placement of bus shelters at Sandlewood Court and Catawba Pines.

UTILITIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Water is currently available to a majority of the planning area as shown on **MAP 5, Utilities**. Notable areas that are not served are as follows: Pleasant Lanes Subdivision on Caleb Setzer Road, Eastover Subdivision on Caleb Setzer Road, Travis Road, McRee/Goforth Road, Sky Drive/Neighbors Lane, and a Portion of Morning Side Heights Subdivision on NC Hwy 16. Prestige Heights subdivision on Burris Road is serviced by a privately operated community well system. Water is provided to the area by the City of Newton, which uses the Jacob Fork River as its water Source and treats it in its plant which treats 2.2 million gallons per day (mgd). The water plant has an 8 mgd capacity.

Sewer availability is limited to the portion of the planning area that is located within the city limits with an exception of the East 1st Street-Della Lane-Griggs Lane Area, as shown on **MAP 5, UTILITIES**. In addition to the area within the City, Dale Earnhart Chevrolet is served with City Sewer. The remainder of the planning area is served by private septic tank systems.

The City just recently completed a project that will accept sewer from Conover that was previously served by their Southeast Waste Water Plant, which is being shut down due to the impact of the Newton-Conover Eastern Loop. This additional 0.6 mgd will flow through the planning area via the Town Creek outfall to the Clark Creek Waste Water plan, which is current using 3.6 mgd of its 7.5 mgd designed capacity.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

Utility accessibility can be a factor in dictating where new development occurs, specifically commercial, industrial, and higher density residential. Utilities can be used as a tool to guide growth to areas where higher intensity development is desired as well as a tool to pace development so that it occurs at the appropriate time. In addition, utilities need to be sized appropriately for current demand as well as anticipated future development. The accessibility of sewer is important to the water quality of streams in the area. Although there are no specific problems with the streams in the planning area, water quality is an issue for Clark Creek which has tributaries originating in the planning area.

The impact of the Conover Interceptor project on the Town Creek out fall needs to be monitored and when the out falls capacity reaches 50 % of the pipe addition capacity needs to be constructed to meet the needs at that time as well as future need.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- U-1.** Land use intensity should be dependent upon the accessibility of utilities and should be reflective of **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USES**.
- U-2.** The City should extend water lines to the Prestige Heights Subdivision to replace the existing community well system that is currently showing signs of strain.
- U-3.** Water lines and Sewer lines should be extended to service areas when there is concentration of well and septic tank failures, new development in an area, and/or a concentration of existing households desiring to obtain and pay for water and sewer service extensions, with top priority given to those areas within the City Limits.
- U-4.** The City should monitor capacity on existing lines and plan to increase capacity of those lines when capacity reaches 50 %.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The area contains a diverse mix of industrial and warehouse facilities, including furniture manufacturing, wholesale distribution, textile production, and manufacturing of corrugated boxes. These include H T Hackney Company, Meridian Automotive Systems, and Weyerhaeuser Company which are major employers in the planning area as well as the City. Special Metals and Twin City Knitting are also located in the planning area, and are large users of the City's utilities. In addition to the existing facilities there are several industrial sites varying in size from 2 acres to 50 plus acres. These sites are the Yount Industrial Park, the McCombs tract, and Snyder Paper as shown on **Map 6, Economic Development**. These vacant sites as well as the existing facilities will benefit from their proximity of the Newton-Conover Loop because of the direct connection from the planning area to both I-40 and NC Hwy 16 South.

There are several commercial establishments that serve the planning area. The Food Lion Shopping Center located at the intersection of NC Hwy 10 and NC Hwy 16, is a thriving shopping center with a full service grocery store and other community focused establishments. A neighborhood convenience store is located at the intersection of Mt. Olive Church Road and NC Hwy 10, which is just outside the planning area. Dale Earnhart Chevrolet Dealership is located at the intersection with NC Hwy 16 and the Newton-Conover Loop which serves not only the planning area but eastern Catawba County and beyond.

Currently there are only a few small parcels that are zoned commercial that are vacant and those are located on NC Hwy 10 and NC Hwy 16. In addition the Moose property which is located on NC Hwy 16 South is split by the Newton-Conover Loop, which could have as many as 25,000 vehicles per day passing through the site when the loop is completed and within twenty years as many as 40,000 vehicles per day. The 30 acre Moose Property, as shown on **MAP 6, Economic Development**, with its location and gentle topography lends it self to being a highly desirable mixed use site.

The Catawba Economic Development Commission (EDC) recruits industry for the City of Newton as well as the rest of Catawba County. The EDC which has historically sought out manufacturing facilities is now expanding that search to include non-manufacturing sectors such as hospitals; labs and services; call and service centers; offices, headquarters, research, office parks; commercial centers; continuing care retirement communities; and aviation services.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

Diversity is important aspect of economic development because diversity in an areas economic base keeps the local economy from completely collapsing when a particular type of industry suffers or declines. While the area has existing diversity, effort should be focused toward attracting more diverse industry to replace the shrinking textile and furniture sector. Efforts should be focused on quality growth instead of growth just for the sake of growing. Quality development will increase the stability of the tax base in the area as well as make the area more attractive for investment for both

existing and new industries. Flexible regulations need to be in place to accommodate the needs of existing industries as well as attract new industries.

New commercial land use should be directed to areas that minimize their impact on existing commercial uses both within the planning area and those beyond the planning area. Care should be given to limit the amount of commercially zoned land so as to keep the supply proportional to the demand which will lead to higher quality development. Also large areas of commercial zoning are not in the best interest of the planning area because it could lead to the demise of commercial areas both within and outside of the planning area, nor would it be complimentary to the existing land uses.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- ED-1.** Regulations should be developed which will encourage high quality development by prohibiting the types of industry that could be detrimental to the area and providing for attractive, well designed industrial and commercial facilities that contribute to community character and incorporate strong architectural contributions to the community's character.
- ED-2.** The City should explore options to market the McCombs Tracts, the vacant portion of the Synder Paper Property, and the Yount Industrial Park.
- ED-3.** A market study of the existing commercial areas should be undertaken. This study area for this study should include the Eastside area as well as the City's planning jurisdiction. The commercial areas should be evaluated on commercial uses and future needs as well as their vulnerability to new commercial development.
- ED-4.** The City should adopt the land use plan that is reflective of **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USE**, which favors a nodal development pattern around intersections for commercial land use as opposed to strip commercial.
- ED-5.** The City and EDC should focus on recruiting business and industry that does not have high demands on water or sewer as well as those that have good air quality ratings.
- ED-6.** New commercial areas in addition to those shown on **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USE**, should be justified by Market analysis that addresses existing and future demand. The plan should then be amended if needed to reflect the findings.

ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Eastside Planning Area contains portions of three major drainage features as shown on **MAP 7, Hydrology**. These are McLin Creek, Town Creek, and Smyre Creek. McLin Creek is located in the northeastern part of the planning area, flows northwest to southeast, and drains 36% of the planning area. McLin Creek flows into Lyle Creek to the east of the planning area, which ultimately flows into Lake Norman. Town Creek forms the western boundary of the planning area, and flows north to south, and drains 56% of the planning area. Smyre Creek is part of the eastern boundary of the planning area, flows north to south, and drains 9% of the planning area. Smyre Creek Converges with Town Creek outside the planning area and Town Creek flows into Clark Creek.

The City of Newton is a NPDES Phase II Community and is required by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources to submit a Stormwater Management Plan. The Plan which lays out Newton's plan to manage stormwater covers five main areas. Those are public education and outreach on stormwater impacts; public involvement and participation; illicit discharge detection and elimination; construction site stormwater runoff control; and post construction management. The City has submitted its plan and is awaiting State approval currently. The Plan will apply to the Eastside Planning Area, as well as the rest of the City's Jurisdiction.

During the most recent flood study done by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1980, a 100 year flood plain was established along McLin Creek and a portion of its tributaries and Town Creek. The McLin Creek flood plain was amended in 1999 because of the impact that the Newton-Conover Loop will have on it once constructed. A total of 80 acres, 4.8% of the planning area is located in the flood plain.

The Catawba County Soil Survey has identified the prominent soils in the planning area as being the Cecil and Hiwassee series, which are suitable for development. There are some small pockets of Congaree, Chewacla, and Worsham series soils which are limiting to development. These soils are located in or along creeks and streams; and are prone to flooding and have poor drainage.

The elevation in the planning area ranges from 845 to 1,045 feet above sea level. This is a difference in elevation of 200 feet which is reflective of the areas rolling topography.

The Eastside Planning Area is scattered with stands of hardwood and evergreens among the existing development. These stands represent both undeveloped unmanaged tracts and stands of timber that are in the United States Forestry Service Program.

The Eastside Planning Area is located in the Unifour, which consists of Catawba, Caldwell, Burke and Alexander Counties, is currently in violation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) air quality standards. EPA has set national air quality standards for six common pollutants, also referred to as "criteria" pollutants. These criteria pollutants are ozone, fine particle matter, lead, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide. The Unifour area currently exceeds the standards for two of the six common pollutants, which are ozone and fine particle matter. If these high levels continue the

area could be in danger of being labeled non-attainment. Measures that states and localities may be required to take to control ozone pollution may include stricter controls on emissions from industrial facilities, additional planning requirements for transportation sources or other programs like gasoline vapor recovery controls. A nonattainment designation does not mean that the area must curb its growth nor does it mean the loss of highway funds - two common myths associated with ozone and fine particle matter designation. The Unifour has been pro-active regarding air quality improvement efforts since 2000 when the area first learned that ozone levels may violate new standards. The Unifour Air Quality Committee (UAQC) meets monthly to address air quality issues. In December, 2002, the UAQC developed an Early Action Compact (EAC) agreement that was signed by all four counties, six municipalities, the NC Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) and the US EPA. The intent of the EAC is for the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the Unifour Area to be developed sooner, the control measures implemented sooner and the 8-hour standard achieved in a more expeditious manner than under the normal SIP development timeline. With the EAC schedule, the SIP is due no later than December 31, 2004. Under the normal schedule, the SIP is due three years after the non-attainment designation which would be in 2007. The ultimate result is that the residents of the Unifour Area will breathe cleaner air sooner.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

Efforts should be made to protect and preserve the water quality of McLin Creek, Town Creek, and Smyre Creek and their respective tributaries. While there are no reported problems with any of the three drainage systems now, it is much easier to maintain them than it is to improve. Threats to water quality include but are not limited to storm water run-off from existing and new construction; failing septic tanks; unregulated point source discharge; and reduction of existing vegetation which stabilizes stream banks and filters out some pollutants. The impact of these threats should be minimized if not eliminated.

Care should be given to minimize flood hazards by respecting 100yr flood plain through adherence to the FEMA Guidelines as well as the City of Newton Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to flood plains. In following and abiding by those regulations, flood hazard impacts can be minimized on adjoining property. In addition, wetlands should be protected because they are an important part of the local ecosystem in that they provide food and shelter to local wildlife; cleanse and recharge the local water table; and control flood waters.

Development should be directed to sites that are capable and suitable for proposed projects. Areas with steep slopes should be avoided for projects with large footprints. Those types of development should be directed to areas with better site characteristics such as flat or gentle slopes and suitable soils. Projects should conform to a site as opposed to forcing a site to conform to a project. Sites should be left as natural as possible and preserve sensitive environmental features such as steep slopes, stream bottoms, and forested areas.

Dense and diverse development patterns should be encouraged where appropriate in an effort to reduce the amount of time that residents of the planning area as well as those who work, play, and do business in the planning area spend on the road, thus reducing the amount of particulate matter, ozone and other pollutants emitted into the environment. Although it is not practical to eliminate the automobile as a mobility option, efforts should be made to develop alternative modes of

transportation, whether it is to recreate or to replace a trip that would be made ordinarily by automobile. Efforts should be made to reduce emissions of not only the automobile but other sources that deteriorate the quality of the air. Consideration should be given to the types of uses that will locate in the planning area. Efforts should be made to insure that new uses as well as existing uses are considerate of their surroundings and to the extent feasible, minimize their impact on neighboring uses by reducing or mitigating sources of light, noise, air, water, and other types of pollution.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- EV-1.** Streams within the planning area should be protected with a minimum of 30' buffer from the stream bank as shown on **MAP 7, Hydrology**.
- EV-2.** Higher density residential development should be located close proximity to commercial and industrial areas and where water and sewer utilities are present.
- EV-3.** Pedestrian and bicycle amenities, such as sidewalks, greenways, and bike lanes should be constructed to connect residential areas with commercial, recreational and industrial areas.
- EV-4.** Existing trees and vegetation should be retained to the fullest extent possible with weight being placed on areas around streams and drainage features as well as areas between different levels of use and intensity.
- EV-5.** Areas that are within flood plains should be used as opportunities for passive recreation and active recreation as needed. Activities other than open space, recreation, or agriculture should be discouraged from being located within Flood Plains.
- EV-6.** Existing vegetation should be used for screening when it is found to be sufficient. Existing vegetation is preferred over the use of planted screenings. If the existing vegetation is not up to standard then it should be supplemented to bring existing screening up to standard.
- EV-7.** Any adopted Post-Construction Stormwater ordinance should be considerate of issues unique to the Eastside Planning Area.
- EV-8.** The City should review its list of permitted uses and impose limits on those that adversely impact air quality in terms of ozone and particulate matter.
- EV-9.** The City should adopt an incentive policy that recognizes the importance of air quality and impacts on the built environment.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The built environment within the planning area is similar to other areas of town which developed post World War II i.e.: auto-oriented, large blocks, lack of street connectivity, void of pedestrian facilities, these are indicative of the development patterns in the planning area.



Figure 1: The Graphic on the left is the transportation network of the Planning Area. Note the lack of connectivity and large blocks. The graphic on the right is the same size area from the area around the Central Business District. Note connected street network and smaller blocks

Single family homes within the planning area range from homes built in the 1900s to homes currently under construction, examples can be seen in **Figure 2**. The style of homes is a varying mix of

Figure 2: Examples of Single-family homes in the area



bungalow, ranch, and today's neo-eclectic style, (a blend of housing styles.) Manufactured Homes are scattered amongst single family site built homes in the planning area, with the exception of East 1st

Street Mobile Home Park (formerly known as McDaniels Mobile Home Park), and McCree Trace, which is a manufactured home subdivision. The homes located on Burris Road, Mount Olive Church Road, NC Hwy 16, NC Hwy 10, East 1st Street, and East 11th Street are placed more than 60 feet from the right of way. This is also true of homes that were built prior to the mid-eighties located in subdivisions.

Multi-family with the exception of the occasional duplex is limited to four projects. They are Sandalwood Court with 74 units, Day Spring with 10 units, Catawba Pines with 68 units, and Mount Olive Manor currently under construction, which will be 64 units at build out. Sandalwood Court, Catawba Pines, and Day Spring are all internally accessed by either a single or series of private drives. The buildings have very little interaction with adjoining properties and buildings; they face inward towards parking areas. The initial building in Mount Olive Manor, which is still under construction, will be situated on public streets that will eventually connect to future development. These buildings not only interact with each other but also with the public space of the street.



Figure 3: Sandalwood Court with buildings surrounding parking area and no interconnection among the five parking lots.



Figure 4: Mt Olive Manor with buildings that relate to the street and street that extend to the property line for future development, which allow for interconnection.



Figure 5: Food Lion Shopping Center at the Intersection of NC Hwy 10 and NC Hwy 16.

The commercial development in the planning area is auto-oriented, which is typical of commercial development built post World War II. This type of development consists of a structure set back considerably from the street and separated from the street by a large parking lot with no landscaping.

Subdivision open space dedication has only been a requirement since 1989. There are no standards for subdivisions as to where open space has to be within the development. Of the two subdivisions in the area that have been completed since 1992, the open space is located behind lots, which is not as visible or as accessible as it would be if it was adjacent to a street.

Signs are a part of doing business within the planning area just as they are anywhere. On-premises signs are located in front of industrial, commercial, and institutional facilities within the planning area. The City's Zoning Ordinance regulates size, height and placement. Billboards occupy spots along NC Highway 16 and NC Highway 10; however no new signs are permitted to be constructed in those corridors. Billboards are permitted in other locations within the planning area and high-traffic sites are desirable targets for these types of signs.

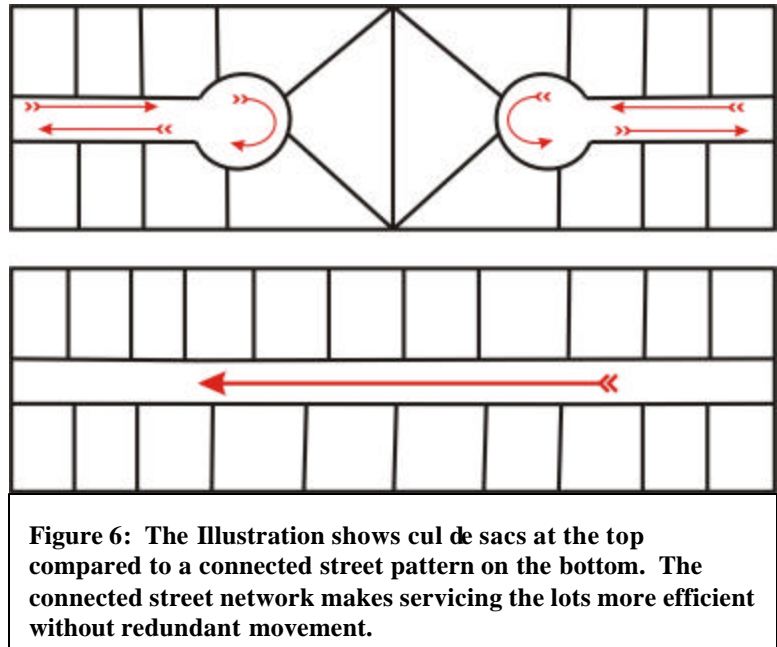
The Planning Area's suburban development pattern creates a challenge to provide urban services. The lack of connectivity lengthens trips for services such as solid waste collection and recycling, thus increasing cost to provide those services. In addition the lack of connectivity increases the number of vehicle miles traveled. Advertisement firms in effort to get our attention, place obtrusive billboards that block views of natural vistas. Pedestrian activity is sparse and often non-existent due to lack of pedestrian facilities. The cost to extend utilities to sprawling disconnected development is cost prohibitive due to the low number of customers per length of installed infrastructure components, causing some residents to go without these desirable utilities.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

The City should require street connectivity so as to reduce traffic volumes on Arterial and collector Streets and lower the vehicle miles traveled, which will help improve air quality by lowering emissions. Connectivity will provide adequate access for emergency and service vehicles and enhance non-vehicular travel such as pedestrian and bicycle modes. Cul de Sacs should be limited. Connectivity should be encouraged between developments and interconnectivity within development should be pursued as well. This is necessary in order to ensure that streets function in an independent manner.

Development that is pedestrian friendly should be required. Streets should have sidewalks on both sides and development should be related to the street by pedestrian connections. The area along a street

should be made to be attractive and interesting to pedestrians by adding landscaping, such as trees and shrubs, by placing buildings close the street, and by providing parks, plazas, and other public space along the street as well. Buildings not only should be close to the street but interact with the street by having entrances that face and are connected to the sidewalk system. Houses should be built for the inhabitants and their facades should indicate that. The garage should not be the first item that is seen



when viewing the home, so garages should be separate from the house, or if they must be included with the home, they should be either rear or side loaded.

Open space is currently required within subdivisions but there are not requirements on the placement and use of this space. Open space dedication should be used to protect environmentally sensitive land such as flood plains, wetlands, and steep slopes; provide recreation, preserve significant features such as windrows and fence lines, and provide permanent buffers. Subdivisions and other development should feature open space as a prominent feature in their design.

New Billboards should not be permitted along the Newton-Conover East Loop, as well any arterial or collector streets within the planning area. Uniform directional signs should be used within the planning area to direct traffic to industrial facilities in an effort to reduce visual clutter along the roadside and provide motorists with information that they need in a neat and orderly fashion.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- CC-1.** The City should develop regulations that require connectivity in subdivisions and developments and interconnectivity within.
- CC-2.** The City should require sidewalks to be constructed along both sides of all new streets and along existing streets for abutting new development. The City should require that greenways be constructed in all new development at locations as shown on **MAP 3, PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**.
- CC-3.** The City should lobby the North Carolina Department of Transportation to include sidewalks and bike lanes on all projects within the planning area when these new or upgraded transportation facilities are recommended by this or other Planning documents.
- CC-4.** The City should develop a design manual to serve as a guide for developers to build projects that are pedestrian friendly.
- CC-5.** The City should revise the open space requirements in the subdivision ordinance to include standards as to location and use so open space is more prominent and accessible to residents.
- CC-6.** The City should require that open space be dedicated and developed in commercial and industrial planned developments at appropriate locations.
- CC-7.** The City should adopt specific ordinance language to prohibit new Billboards within the planning area.
- CC-8.** The City should adopt specific regulations which will provide for uniform directional signs to direct individuals to various sites within the planning area.
- CC-9.** The City should develop regulations to reduce or minimize the use of Cul de Sacs in developments.

GOVERNMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Planning Area is located on the eastern edge of the City's jurisdiction. 64.5% of the planning area is located within the corporate limits with the remainder being within the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction. The majority of the planning area within the city limits was annexed in the 1988 Eastside Annexation, with Farmington Hills and Mayfair added by voluntary annexation within the past 5 years. Conover's City limits are in close proximity to the Northeast and Claremont's City limits abuts Newton to the East. The remainder of the area to the east and southeast is in Catawba County jurisdiction. The County completed the Balls Creek Small Area Plan in 2002 and the Catawba Small Area Plan in 2004, both of which adjoin the planning area. The City participated in the planning process of both plans.

The Eastern loop extends from NC Hwy 16 North of Conover to NC Hwy 16 South at the existing intersection of NC Hwy 16 and East P Street. In Conover the loop is named Thornburg Drive. Currently the Newton Section is unnamed. When the alignment once followed Caleb Setzer Road, it was agreed to by both the City Council and the Planning commission that the name for the loop be Caleb Setzer Road. Now the alignment does not follow Caleb Setzer Road and Caleb Setzer Road will remain, although it will no longer intersect with NC Hwy 16.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

The City should pursue voluntary annexation as a condition of utility expansion. This would give the City the ability to add to its tax base and to provide urban services to developed areas.

The City should pursue statutory boundary/annexation agreements with Conover and Claremont in order to reduce redundancies in service and plan future services in the area.

The City should be aware of the annexation, utilities, and land use plans of other jurisdictions in areas adjacent to the planning area in an effort to assist the City in providing the most efficient form of government possible.

The City should be aware that Conover calls the northern portion of the Eastern Loop Thornburg Drive. The eastern loop will be a primary access for individuals going to the Eastside of town and consistency among road names should be kept where it is possible.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- G-1.** The City should pursue voluntary annexation where State Statutes permit to provide areas with urban services as well as increase the tax base.

- G-2.** The City should work with Claremont and Conover in adopting a mutually agreed upon boundary agreements in order to avoid redundant services and provide efficient government services.
- G-3.** The City should name the Newton portion of the Eastern Loop, from the Newton City Limits to the intersection of NC Hwy 16, Thornburg Drive.
- G-4.** The City should continue to participate with the County on small area plans that are adjacent to the Eastside Planning area

LAND USE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Table 2: Land Use Distribution below quantifies the land use distribution in the area as shown on **MAP 9, Existing Land Use** and **Table 3 Zoning District Distribution** quantifies the existing zoning in the area as shown on **MAP 10, Existing Zoning**.

Table 2: Land Use Distribution		
Land use	Acres	% of Total
Residential	787.08	40.59%
Manufacturing	192.596	9.93%
Commercial	23.31	1.20%
Office/Institutional	29.925	1.54%
Open space Vacant	768.388	39.63%
Road Right of Ways	138.30	7.13%
TOTAL	1939	100.00%

Table 3: Zoning District Distribution.		
Zoning	Acres	% of Total
B-2	10.563	0.54%
B-4	38.207	1.97%
EM-1	178.119	9.19%
M-1	135.58	6.99%
P-1	5.692	0.29%
PD-H	42.509	2.19%
PD-SC-C	5.827	0.30%
R-11	32.344	1.67%
R-20	425.537	21.95%
R-20A	607.482	31.33%
R-7A	122.358	6.31%
R-9	196.059	10.11%
Road Right of Way	138.3	7.13%
Total	1939	100.00%

Over 40% of the land within the Planning Boundary is used for Residential purposes and another 40% is vacant which is reflective of the scattering of homes and subdivisions along the main roads in the planning area tucked in among the 768 acres of open space/vacant land. The mix of housing in the area ranges from multifamily to single family attached (town homes) to single family detached on both small and large lots. This existing pattern of land use is reflected by the zoning where over 80% of the area is zoned residential, with over 52% of the Planning area being zoned low density single family residential. The area contains two zoning districts that allow for the placement of manufactured housing in which makes up 41 % of the area and which has led to the placement of 135 manufactured housing units since 1981, equaling 45% of all manufactured homes placed within the city's

jurisdiction. During the same time period 49% of permits issued for single family new construction in the Planning area were issued for manufactured homes compared to just 20% for all of the City's Jurisdiction.

Commercial activity is limited to the intersection of NC Hwy 16 and NC Hwy 10, intersection of NC Hwy 16 and Caleb Setzer Road, and Mt. Olive Church Road near the intersection of Mcree Road. The zoning in the area reflects the land use however there are several properties that are zoned Commercial that are currently vacant or used for residential uses. There is a parcel on East 1st Street that is zoned B-4 General business as shown on **MAP 10, Existing Zoning**, that used to be a neighborhood grocery store. The building remains but the business has been discontinued for more than 15 years.

Industrial uses are located at the northwestern edge of the Planning area along Mt. Olive Church Road and Burris Road, as well as the Snyder Paper facility and property located near the intersection of the Newton-Conover Loop and Mt. Olive Church Road.

Other factors influencing land use are the NC Highway 10 and 16, Highway Corridor Protection Overlay Districts. These overlay districts regulate driveway spacing, require increased setbacks, and prohibit new billboards from being constructed in order to maximize the existing capacity and preserve the right of way for future expansion.

OBJECTIVES

Residential Density should be based on availability of sewer and water; existing land use characteristics; and proximity to transportation. This will enable the City to maximize existing facilities and plan for future needs as well as providing for a broad range of housing types within the planning area. The placement of manufactured housing should be limited and other housing types should be encouraged to provide affordable housing, a role which manufactured housing has been serving for years.

Commercial development should be located as shown on **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USES** and consideration should be given to availability of existing and proposed utility and transportation infrastructure. Care should be given to integrate commercial uses into the community maximizing accessibility and function as well as minimizing any adverse effects such uses might have on adjacent land uses as well as to minimize the impact that such uses might have on existing commercial uses both within the Planning area and those beyond.

Industrial facilities should be located in areas as shown on **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USES** and consideration should be given to the availability of existing and proposed utility and transportation infrastructure. In addition to infrastructure, topography and adjoining land uses should be carefully considered in designating future sites. The siting of new facilities should be in a manner that maximizes the site and reduces the adverse effect that such a facility might impose on the adjoining properties.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- LU-1.** Designate residential density as shown on **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USES**. The map designates areas with availability of water and sewer, which are in close proximity to major roads as areas where higher density residential should occur. In areas which contain concentrations of existing single family homes, care should be taken to protect those areas by designating them as such.
- LU-2.** Allow higher density residential development and a mixture of housing types to be placed in close proximity to employment centers. The variety of housing types along with higher density provisions will allow opportunities for affordable housing.
- LU-3.** The amount of zoning designated R-20A Single Family and Manufactured Housing and R-7A Multi-Family and Manufactured Housing, which count for 37.6% of the Planning area should be reduced. The reduction in size should reflect concentration of existing mobile homes as well as protect existing site built neighborhoods. This should be done proactively.
- LU-4.** The Rowe Subdivision, which consists of an area north of Mt. Olive Church Road along Ruth Avenue, Ann Avenue, Sarah Avenue, and Thomas Drive as shown in **Figure 7**, should be rezoned from its existing R-9 Multifamily Residential District to R-11 Single Family and Two-Family Residential District which would be more reflective of the existing land use.
- LU-5.** New residential developments should be sited in a manner so as to reduce their impact on existing development by utilizing existing site characteristics such as streams, gullies, and other natural drainage features; un-buildable areas due to slope, soil conditions, or flood plains; as buffers between building types. Where natural features don't exist, planted or erected screenings and buffers of appropriate size should be used.



Figure 7. Existing land use in the Rowe Subdivision.

- LU-6.** Commercial land use should be limited to locations as shown of **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USES**. This includes areas designated as commercial and mixed-use. They are to be nodal in nature as opposed to a stripped out development. These areas as delineated are shown to compliment existing land use patterns as well as taking in consideration existing land use activities such as the Community Shopping Center located at the intersection of NC Hwy 10 and NC Hwy 16, which is a thriving shopping center with a full service grocery store and other community focused establishments and the neighborhood convenience center located at the intersection of Mt. Olive Church Road and NC Hwy 10, which is just outside the planning area and is delineated on the Balls Creek Small Area Plan as being included in the neighborhood shopping center in that plan. It is felt large areas of commercial designation would not be in the best interest of the Planning area because it could lead to the demise of existing commercial areas, as well as those just outside of the Planning area and would not be complimentary to existing land uses.
- LU-7.** Industrial land use should be limited to the areas indicated on **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USES**. Topography was the most limiting factor in designating future industrial land, within the Planning area because of the steep slopes which are prevalent and which can escalate the cost of construction.
- LU-8.** Office uses should be included in areas designated commercial and mixed use as shown on **MAP 11, FUTURE LAND USES**. The location of such uses would put support services in close proximity to commercial and industrial clients and their employees, as well as nearby residents.

Eastside Area Demographics

City of Newton Eastside Area, Planning Area Growth: 1990 to 2000				
Year	1990	2000	Net Change	% Change
Persons	1,711	1,803	92	5.4%
Households	499	570	71	14.2%
Persons/Household	3.42	3.16	-0.26	-7.6%

Source: US Census, 1990, and 2000; compiled by WPCOG Data Center, January 2003.

City of Newton Population Growth: 1990 to 2000				
Year	1990	2000	Net Change	% Change
Persons	9,077	12,659	3,582	39.5%
Households	3,783	5,007	1,224	32.4%
Persons/Household	2.39	2.52	0.13	5.4%

Source: US Census, 1990, and 2000; Catawba County GIS, 2000; as compiled by WPCOG Data Center, January 2003.

Race and Ethnicity, 2000				
Place	White	Black	Other	Hispanic (any race)
Eastside Area	72.0%	14.8%	13.2%	10.8%
Census Tract 113	73.9%	14.5%	11.6%	8.9%
City of Newton	77.6%	12.3%	10.1%	9.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; WPCOG Data Center 2002.

Age of Population, 2000				
Place	Persons Age 18 and under (% of all persons)	Persons Age 19 to 64 (% of all persons)	Persons Age 65 and older (% of all persons)	Median Age
Eastside Area	28.6%	58.4%	13.0%	34.2
Census Tract 113	26.1%	61.9%	12.0%	37.5
City of Newton	24.8%	58.4%	16.8%	34.6

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; WPCOG Data Center 2002.

Change in Housing and Migration		
Place	% of Persons living in the same house between 1995 and 2000	In-migration 1995 and 2000 (% of population)
Eastside Area	55.4%	17.0%
Census Tract 113	55.8%	16.6%
City of Newton	53.3%	17.4%

Note: In-migration refers to those persons that moved into the listed place from another county between 1995 and 2000.

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

Commuting Time to Work, 2000		
Place	Average Work Commute Time	% of Workers commuting over 40 minutes to work
Eastside Area	20.8 minutes	6.9%
Census Tract 113	20.8 minutes	7.0%
City of Newton	20.8 minutes	8.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990.

Place of Work, 2000	
Place	% of Workers Employed Outside County of Residence
Eastside Area	8.7%
Census Tract 113	9.1%
City of Newton	11.3%
Catawba County	15.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

Employment, 2000				
Place	% Employed in Professions	% Employed in Service & Prof. Support	% Employed in Manufacturing	% Employed in Farming
Eastside Area	13.3%	34.8%	51.9%	0.0%
Census Tract 113	14.7%	32.4%	52.9%	0.0%
City of Newton	18.2%	35.2%	46.1%	0.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

Household Income, 1999			
Place	1999 Estimated Median Household Income	% of 1999 Households with Incomes Below \$10,000	% of 1999 Household Incomes over \$75,000
Eastside Area	\$34,145	10.8%	8.9%
Census Tract 113	\$34,881	10.8%	9.6%
City of Newton	\$36,696	10.2%	13.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

Median Gross Rent and Median Housing Value, 2000		
Place	Median Gross Rent	Median Housing Value
Eastside Area	\$454	\$81,043
Census Tract 113	\$453	\$80,200
City of Newton	\$528	\$83,900

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000.

City of Newton Small Area 1 Projected Planning Area Growth: 2000 to 2015						
Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	Growth 2000 to 2015	% Change
Persons	1,803	1,846	1,884	1,920	117	6.5%
Households	570	615	661	708	138	24.2%
Persons/Household	3.16	3.00	2.85	2.71	-0.45	-14.2%

Source: WPCOG Data Center, January 2003.